



BOARD OF VISITORS

THE VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

P.O. BOX 2069

STAUNTON, VA 24402-2069

Senator Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.
Board Chairman

April 6, 2016

Minutes of Meeting

Call to Order: Senator Hanger called the meeting to order at 10:39 am.

Roll Call of Members: Members present: Senator Emmett Hanger, Delegate Dickie Bell, Delegate Tony Wilt, Mike Asip, Alice Frick, Judy Sorrel, Paula Johnson, John Pleasants, Ann Latham-Anderson and Virgil Cook

Members absent: Senator Barbara Favola

Advisors to BOV Present: Wendell Roberts, AAG; Mona Siddiqui, AAG; Pat Trice, Superintendent

Absent: Wanda Council, VDOE

The roll call of members was conducted by way of introductions. Senator Hanger declared a quorum.

Reading and approval of December 9, 2015 meeting minutes: Judy Sorrel moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to accept the minutes as distributed. The motion passed.

Reports

Superintendent's Report: Pat Trice, Superintendent, reported that the boys goalball team recently won the EAAB Goalball Championship. VSDB will host the tournament here next year.

Pat noted that the Governor visited VSDB last month, meeting both staff and students. Photos are on the school's website. He was impressed with the programs and services. When the Governor questioned what VSDB's biggest challenge was, Pat stated that it was changing a culture and encouraging staff to think differently to meet the challenges that VSDB's changing population presents.

A flyer about the next Farm to Table event, scheduled for August 27, 2016, was given to each Board member.

Pat gave an update on the Foundation. The Foundation recently funded 10 brailers for the residential program. They are funding a Welcome Video which will be placed on our website and will be fully accessible. Pat is currently in the process of completing this video. The Foundation also funded a trip for Becky Watson and Keith Van Fossen to visit the Alabama Institute to observe their programs. Another school that we would like to visit is the Washington State School for the Deaf and the Blind.

Although Main Hall renovation is not in this year's state budget, VSDB did get funding to complete Bradford Hall.

Pat reported increased interest in renting space in the vacant buildings. A video editing business should be moving in soon.

VSDB accreditation through CEASD and SACS has been postponed because the accrediting agencies understood that, with change of leadership, VSDB is not in a position at this time for representatives to see what they need to see to make a fair evaluation. The accreditation review will be held in the spring of 2017.

Pat asked Becky Watson, Director of Student Life, to speak about the trip to the Alabama Institute. Becky reported that Alabama has eight outreach centers and serves 23,500 students across the state. As soon as a child who has a sensory impairment is born, the outreach center is contacted and the center in turn makes connections with the family and other support groups such as the Helen Keller Center. Their students are eligible for post graduate work and their Independent Living Apartments are impressive. VSDB hopes to emulate those programs.

Becky also noted that Alabama is a parental-choice state. Pat emphasized that we are not looking to reinvent the wheel, but rather to use the expertise of other schools with successful programs.

VSDB held a Direct Service Provider's Stakeholder Meeting on March 3rd. This meeting included Superintendents, special-education directors, and agency providers. The meeting was well attended with over 50 participants. VSDB provided updates to stakeholders, and they in turn gave their input on things they would like to see VSDB provide such as consulting services to the LEAs; programs to enhance workforce skills and self-advocacy skills; exposure to STEM programs; training and consultation to teachers and service providers; core subject teacher trainings; and a program to address students with an additional emotional disability.

One concern with the Stakeholders was the venue itself. VSDB wants to be the hub of services including training opportunities. However, VSDB does not have functional meeting facilities for large groups. The Chapel is not fully functional because of the poor acoustics and inadequate lighting. VSDB is exploring options that will increase the functionality of the Chapel. Senator Hanger also questions the possibility of phasing in this cost with the renovation rather than requesting the total cost at one time.

On other program updates, Pat reported that the Foundation has supported efforts to secure donated items and labor to complete the ILS apartments. The apartments have new appliances

and supplies, and the school anticipates having the apartments ready in January of 2017. This program will be the first in the state to provide this type of transition service.

VSDB has piloted the online coursework in the blind department. Thus far one student has taken three courses. Virtual VA now works much better with the JAWS program. Partnering with the local school division has been more challenging. However, VSDB is making a calendar change for the next school year that aligns with the calendars of the local school divisions.

The school has purchased a PAES (Practical Assessment Educational System) lab, thereby giving VSDB the ability to assess both students' abilities and careers in which they may be interested. The lab is a \$3,000 investment. VSDB teachers are brailing the assessments which will make it the only PAES lab in the state that is accessible to the blind.

In addition, VSDB will be looking at the 35 mile restriction currently in place for a child to be a residential student. We would like to remove that barrier in order to support the needs of all students and allow them access to the 24/7 learning environment that the residential program offers.

Pat will attend the CEASD conference in Kansas City, Missouri both to network with peers and to gather information and ideas that will benefit and support the reshaping of VSDB.

Keith Van Fossen showed the Board the trophy from the goalball championship, told them a little about the tournament, and gave a brief description of the West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind where the tournament was held. The West Virginia campus is similar to VSDB; however, they still have the old style residential facility. The state of West Virginia has funded one-to-one technology for all students. The infrastructure of technology in the classrooms is phenomenal. The school has separate buildings for the three schools--deaf, blind and multi-disabled--and a separate residential building for the multi-disabled program. VSDB is proud to have been very progressive integrating its deaf, blind, and multi-disabled students and programs.

Budget and Grants: Janice Rankin, Director of Operations, informed Board members that their travel reimbursement will be smaller this time because the state reimbursement amount has been reduced.

The good news is that as of the end of February VSDB was 5% under budget and, as it stands now, VSDB should be 6% under as of the end of March, partly because utilities are 5% under budget due to a mild winter, in addition to personnel being 1% under budget.

Janice reported that the Flow-Through Grant for \$393,140 is ready to be presented. Ann Latham-Anderson moved to approve the grant. The motion passed.

Auditor of Public Accounts came a month ago to conduct a three-year audit for fiscal years 2013, 2014, and 2015. They have been here twice and are still in the auditing process. From what we

are aware of now, VSDB is in pretty good shape with no major problems. When the final report is received it will be presented to the Board.

Human Resources Director: Nathan McLamb reported that this is recruitment season. He then gave a PowerPoint presentation on our positions and vacancies. As the student population increases or decreases we adjust those positions. Pat added that the most critical position we need is an Assistant Principal. However, we need a Special Education Program Facilitator. Therefore, the lead MD position was repurposed for this. Julie Connor has accepted this position. She will work to get MD students who are currently contained in the classroom out into the mainstream with support, and she will work with the teachers to get them that support. She will also collaborate with Becky Watson to develop the program for the ILS apartment and assist with the expansion of the Workforce Skills program. Her position will put VSDB in a better position to support an overall expansion of services to meet student needs. VSDB will try to fill the Assistant Principal position in another year.

Mike Asip stated that, though the information given today indicated positions we are holding, it would be helpful to know what current staffing is. Pat then gave each Board member a copy of VSDB's most recent staff and student report.

Senator Hanger noted that the state has allocated a 3% salary increase for state employees.

School Report: Keith Van Fossen, Principal, reported that the school's current student enrollment is 94, with 63 in the deaf department and 31 in the blind department. The school is entering the final quarter when SOL testing will be taking place. It has been a successful year, in particular with students' working on their literacy skills, improving reading abilities, and gaining language and vocabulary. VSDB is currently using the Fairview Reading Program. This program focuses on an ASL-to-English connection. The program is proving to be very successful. Visual phonics can also support the Fairview program.

VSDB had a very successful sports season. There are still many activities to come, including prom and graduation. Keith also noted that the school and residential programs are collaborating very well.

Residential Report: Becky Watson, Director of Student Life, reported that previously when students finished school they would go to their dorms for regular activities. She decided to begin an integrated after-school program for both deaf and blind students. There are six different groups mixed between deaf and blind working on outdoor activities, wellness, exercise, baking, crafts, and safety. They meet every other week on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 4:15 to 5:15. During alternate weeks they do their regular floor activities. The program is in its third week, and the students are excited. In the fall there will be plans to expand ways for day students to participate.

Delegate Wilt asked Keith about the graduates this year. Keith answered that there are five graduates, one from the blind department and four from the deaf department, with three going

on to a community college or training facility. Standard diplomas will be awarded to three of the graduates and the other two will receive Applied Studies diplomas.

Continuing Business

Policy Updates: Nate McLamb presented the policies which were given to Board members at the December 9, 2015 meeting to be voted upon today. Following discussion on the policies a revision was requested for Policy S055 *Search and Seizure*, pertaining specifically to *Vehicle Searches* to add “as permitted by law” at the end of the last sentence i.e. “Such patrols and inspections may be conducted without notice, without student consent, or without a search warrant as law permits. A motion was made to approve all policies introduced at the December 9, 2015 meeting including the amendment to Policy S055. The motion passed unanimously.

The following policies were given to each Board member for their review and are to be voted on at the next meeting.

SH01 – Student Health Services overview
SH02 – Student Health Services Staff
SH03 – Universal Precautions Training
SH04 – Universal Precaution Reporting
SH05 – Physical and Dental Exam Requirements
SH06 – Providing Medical and Dental Services
SH07 – Providing Emergency Services
SH08 – Communicable Disease
SH09 – Student Health Screenings
SH10 – Student Allergies
SH11 – Medications
SH12 – Student Sexual Health
SH13 – Substance Abuse

Wendell Roberts, with the Attorney General’s Office, spoke to the Board about the Student Record Policy and asked the Board to make a small operational change to the Purple Policy. On page two there is an adopted list of directory information and the Board is being asked to add “video” release to this directory list. During this discussion the Board also felt the date of birth and address should be removed and replaced with only the student’s age. Mike Asip moved to add the release of video to the directory list and to replace the date of birth and address with only the student’s age. The motion passed.

New Business

Senator Hanger stated that he felt it appropriate at this time to take official action to endorse and support the Superintendent in this time of transition and realignment of personnel.

Delegate Bell moved to adopt a resolution in support of the new superintendent, Pat Trice, and her efforts in transitioning the school and with the increased collaboration with the residential program and with local school divisions. The motion passed unanimously. A formal resolution will be drafted and presented at the next meeting. Senator Hanger asked Virgil Cook, Debbie Burns, and Judy Sorrel to draft a formal resolution commending Pat for her excellent leadership.

Public Comment

Wayne Frick, VSDB Alumni, gave a history and slide show presentation on the new VSDB History Book, dedicated January 20, 2016. Following this presentation, Mr. Frick announced that he would like to add comments about two local representatives, Emmett Hanger and Dickie Bell. Senator Hanger served on the VSDB Advisory Board for many years and was very active in the consolidation of the two schools. Dickie Bell sponsored *House Bill 1435*, which allowed students to take ASL in lieu of foreign language. That bill was signed into law on the front steps of Main Hall. He also supported *House Bill 2018* sponsoring the Deaf Child's Bill of Rights. Mr. Frick then presented these two representatives with a copy of the new History of VSDB in appreciation for both having been a big part of the history of VSDB.

Adjournment John Pleasants moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 8, 2016 at 10:30 am.

Virgil A. Cook, Board Secretary